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20 MARCH 1968
DIAIS 66-68

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DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY (U)



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Sec. 3.3(b) (1)

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DIA INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

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VIETNAM AND RELATED DEVELOPMENTS

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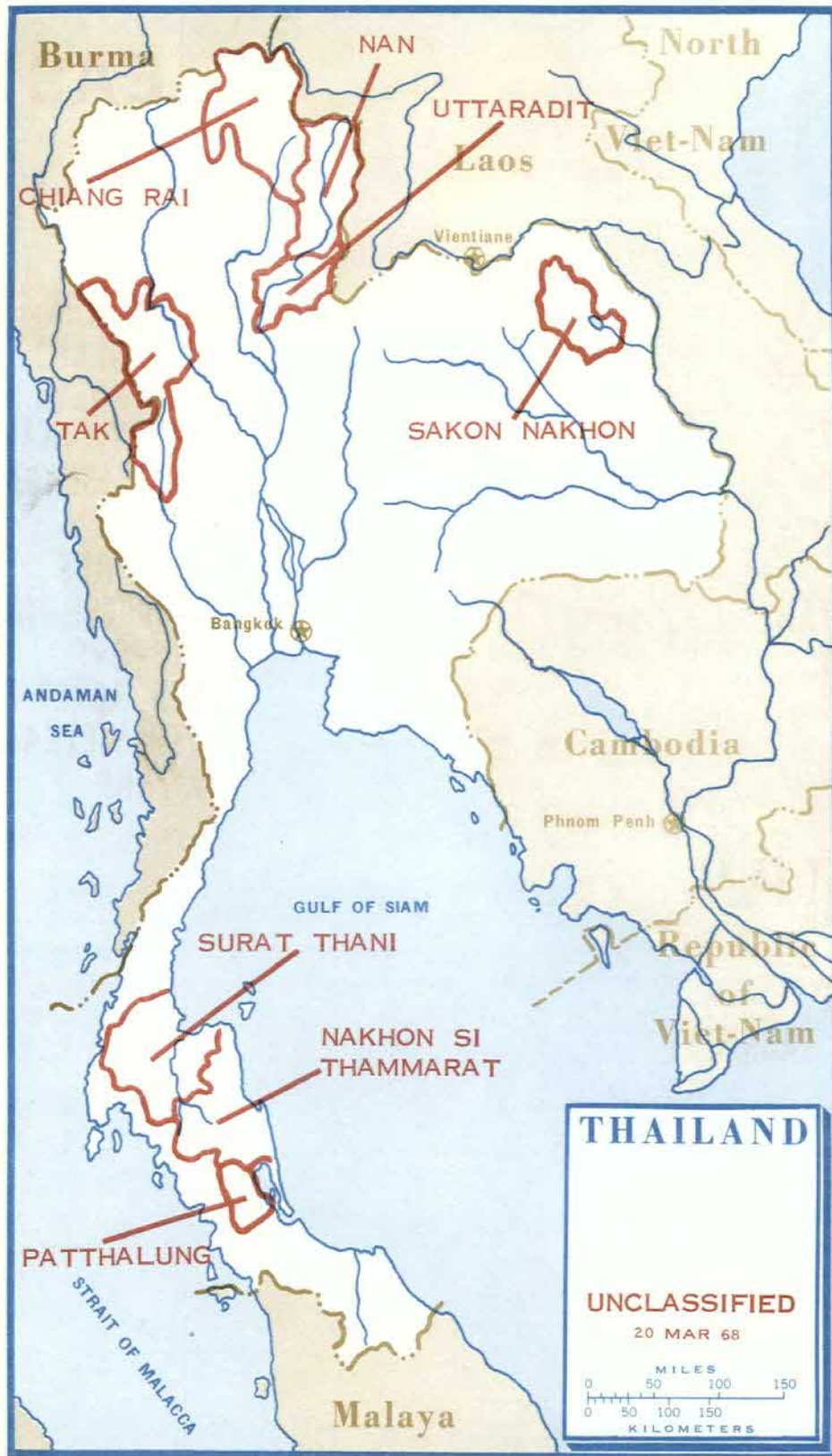
NORTH VIETNAM

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SOUTH VIETNAM

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Insurgency in Thailand During February

The level of Communist insurgency in Thailand during February apparently did not change much from that of the previous month. Second Army Commander Gen Thongcherm apparently had matters under control in the Northeast where insurgency continued at the low level prevailing since late 1967. Government forces in the North, however, suffered relatively heavy casualties in engagements with well-trained guerrilla forces. In the mid-South, acts of violence increased.

The dissidents in the Northeast mounted a number of attacks and harassing actions against local security units and held three armed propaganda meetings. Government-initiated incidents increased slightly over the 30 reported in January. On 10 February, army units that had received special forces training began search-and-destroy operations in Sakon Nakhon Province. To expand its operations, 2d Army Headquarters requested that the 6th and 13th Regimental Combat Teams be deployed to the Northeast, but there has been no response from Bangkok.

In North Thailand, the first encounter in Uttaradit Province took place on the 14th when Border Patrol Police clashed with some 10 rebels, wounding one. Several days later in an adjacent district, Meo insurgents killed a civilian during an attack on a Thai security unit. In Tak Province, dissidents ambushed an operations team, engaged a police unit, and burned a school. Fighting in Nan and Chiang Rai Provinces continued. Nine army and civilian personnel were killed and 38 wounded -- most of the casualties resulted from well-placed mines and booby traps. Insurgent casualties were not reported. The forced evacuation of hill tribes from affected areas has aroused animosity toward the government, and Communist propaganda among them was described as intensive.

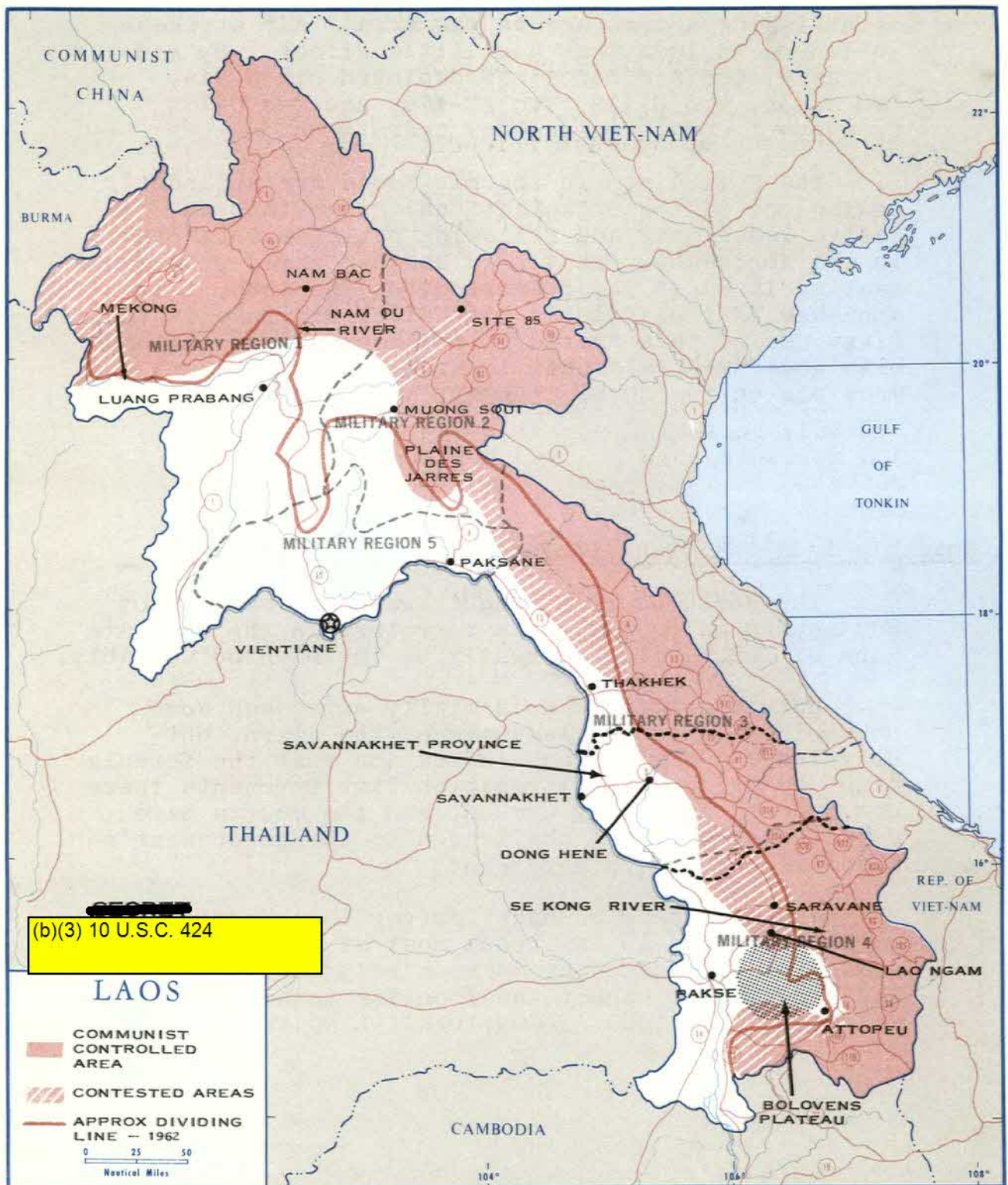
Government forces initiated sweeps in two districts of Chiang Rai Province, and security forces were deployed to five villages in each district. Although they reacted violently, the Communists were unable to prevent the government from

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establishing a presence in the area. Air strikes on insurgent locations had little effect. By mid-February, the air force had deployed six H-34s, two H-43s, two O-1As, two AC-47s, and two U-10s to support counterinsurgency operations.

The Communists in the mid-South are apparently moving out of the organizational stage into an active insurgency and following patterns established in the Northeast. They held another armed propaganda meeting in Surat Thani Province on the 19th, twice ambushed Thai patrols in Patthalung Province in their first use of this tactic in the region, and clashed with government elements in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province on the 20th. (b)(3) 10.U.S.C 424

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Military Developments in Laos, 9-15 March

Except for Military Region (MR) 5, enemy activity increased throughout Laos during the week ending 15 March. Most of the effort appeared to be directed against friendly guerrilla forces, rather than against Royal Lao Army (FAR) positions. The government and the FAR were trying to relieve enemy pressure and to increase military capabilities by reorganizing the FAR and requesting additional US equipment. The enemy is still able to mount serious incursions into friendly-controlled areas.

Military Region 1

Sporadic operations were carried out against friendly guerrilla positions north of the Mekong, and harassing and probing attacks continued against government emplacements along the Nam Ou River north of Luang Prabang. The enemy also moved troops and supplies into northwestern Laos near the Chinese Communist border and repositioned elements along the Mekong west of the royal capital.

Friendly activity consisted of sweep operations near Luang Prabang; the FAR generally continued to occupy static defensive positions. Volunteer Battalion (BV) 16 cleared the area south of the royal capital and encountered only slight resistance; BV 11 launched a seven-day clearing operation 10 kilometers east of the city.

Prime Minister Souvanna reportedly ordered the FAR Inspector General to investigate the FAR's mid-January defeat at Nam Bac. He wants to fix the blame for the defeat and to determine why none of the local commanders made an attempt to regroup their forces while withdrawing.

Military Region 2

The fall of Site 85 on 11 March was apparently the first step in a determined offensive against FAR and friendly guerrilla units in the northeast. The Communists will probably move southwest against the northern edge of the Plaine des Jarres. Simultaneous harassing attacks west and south of the

Plaine would tie down FAR units and prevent them from mounting a concerted offensive.

Some 7,000 to 10,000 refugees were fleeing to the southwest from the area around Site 85 and were creating transportation and feeding problems. Military personnel and civilians near Muong Soui were becoming more doubtful that the enemy offensive would be contained.

Military Region 3

The continued threat to Thakhek and attacks near there led the FAR to launch a clearing operation east of the city in hopes it could retake some recently lost positions. As of 13 March, however, the operation had slowed and contacts were sporadic. Some 3,000 North Vietnamese troops may be deployed about 50 miles east of Thakhek.

In response to reports that enemy units had crossed Route 13 south of Thakhek, Groupement Mobile (GM) 19 started a sweep operation on 14 March.

Military Region 4

Enemy troops were still concentrated around Saravane, Lao Ngam, and Attoupeu but they generally restricted their activity to harassing and probing operations. Preparations were apparently under way, however, for further attacks on Lao Ngam and positions on the Bolovens Plateau.

Communist forces seem capable of supporting two regiments in the latter area. Many trucks continued to cross the Se Kong River and to move northeast of Lao Ngam. A North Vietnamese regiment and four armored cars were reportedly west of the town.

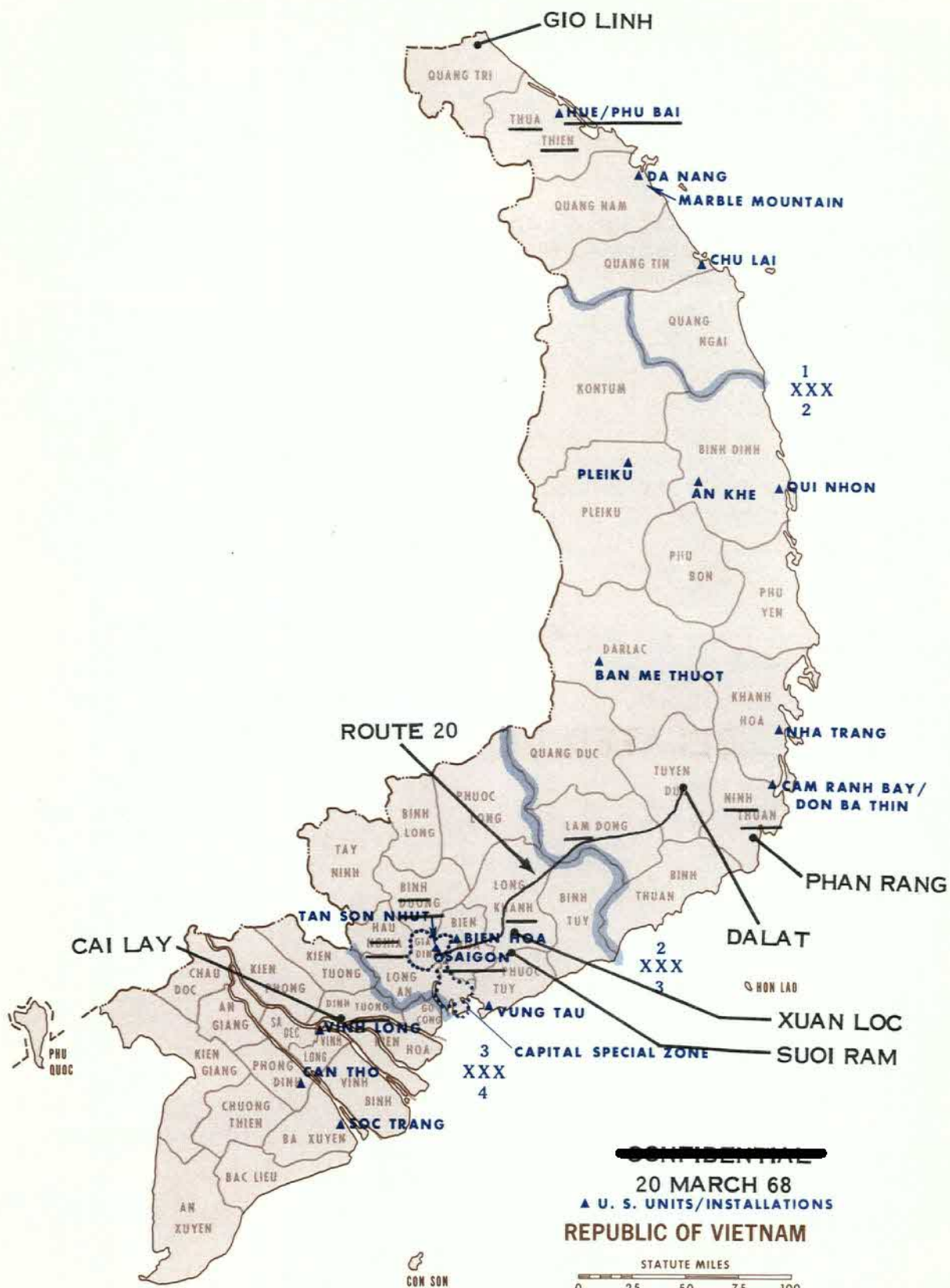
US military observers doubt that the enemy will change the "rules of the game" and make a serious attempt to capture such politically sensitive cities as Saravane and Attoupeu; neither has previously been held by the Pathet Lao. The observers think, however, that Lao Ngam will come under attack. Although it has never been under enemy control, it is less sensitive politically and its occupation would have

little impact on the over-all political situation. It is still believed, therefore, that the sharper-than-usual operations under way during the current dry season do not constitute a general offensive.

Military Region 5

No significant military developments were reported, but 23 civilians were massacred near Vientiane by unidentified persons. (~~SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM~~)

**VIETNAM
AND
RELATED DEVELOPMENTS**



Developments in South Vietnam

(S) US Marines report moderate contact in northern 1st Corps. A buildup near Hue may involve two NVA regiments. In 3d Corps, possible offensive activity by elements of the 5th Viet Cong Division may be forthcoming in Long Khanh Province. Enemy forces have apparently moved north and west out of striking distance of Saigon to avoid major clashes with friendly forces on sweep-and-destroy operations around the city. The enemy is trying to interdict Route 20 in Lam Dong Province north of Saigon, possibly to deny Saigon food. Communists in the Delta province of Dinh Tuong near Cai Lay may be attempting to block traffic on Route 4 and thus isolate the area.

Continued Enemy Activity in Northeastern 1st Corps

(S) In three engagements with enemy forces south-east of Gio Linh and northeast of Phu Bai US Marines were struck with 140-mm rocket, artillery, mortar, and automatic weapons fire. The actions in Thua Thien Province involved an estimated enemy battalion in one case and a 250-man force in two of the encounters. Sixty one enemy deaths were recorded while 10 Marines were killed in the three contacts.

Possible Increase in the Threat to Hue

(S) Sec. 3.3(b) (1) the 95C and the 101D Regiments of the 325Z NVA Division may now be under the control of its "detached element," possibly elements of the 29th Regiment. If true, the two units may join those of the 29th near Hue. The recent movement of terminals of the 95C Regiment to the southwest into Laos could be an indication of that shift.

Increased Road Interdiction Attempts

(S) Enemy forces in central Vietnam have stepped up their operations along Route 20 in Tuyen Duc and

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Lam Dong Provinces, which had been relatively quiet since the effort against Dalat in February. The Communists may be attempting to block food shipments into Saigon, which gets a large quantity of vegetables from Dalat. This effort and that being directed against roads leading from the rice-producing Delta area in 4th Corps may mean that enemy strategy now includes disrupting Saigon's economy. Enemy activity increased in Dinh Tuong Province on 17-18 March near Cai Lay on Route 4 within 60 miles of Saigon. Additionally, on 19 March, three railroad bridges between Da Lot and Phan Rang were damaged or destroyed by mines.

VC-NVA Elements Draw Back From Saigon

(C) Some enemy units are apparently drawing back from Saigon, probably because of Allied operations in the area. The 271st and the 272d Regiments of the 9th VC Division are now reportedly in southern Binh Duong Province and eastern Hau Nghia, respectively.

(C) Sec. 3.3(b) (1) the Headquarters of the 141st NVA Regiment, 7th NVA Division, may now be 15 miles north of Saigon in eastern Binh Duong Province.

(C) It is not believed that the enemy has abandoned his plan to maintain pressure on the capital, and his forces will probably return when Allied pressure subsides.

Activity by Elements of the 5th Viet Cong Division

(C) Sec. 3.3(b) (1) elements of the 5th Viet Cong Division may be planning future operations against Allied forces in Long Khanh Province in 3d Corps. Messages exchanged between the Military Intelligence Section of the 5th Viet Cong Division Headquarters and a subordinate unit have discussed in detail Allied installations, aircraft, and vehicular activity in an area between Xuan Loc and Suai Ram. The Intelligence Section ordered its subordinate to sketch a map of Suai Ram showing the Allied defense network, breaches in the strong

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points and the "characteristics, extent and stability of the defense network." The subordinate unit was ordered to complete the map by 25 March and to indicate the validity of the sources of the information. This subordinate unit has also reported in detail on the deployment of the 18th ARVN Division in the Xuan Loc area.

Hue Political Situation

~~(S)~~ (b)(3) Corruption is reportedly rampant in and around Hue and the 70,000 already-discontented refugees there could pose a serious security problem if supplies fail to reach centers where they are housed. The enemy is known to want to infiltrate such centers in Saigon and create as much discontent as possible. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that a similar attempt will be made in Hue prior to a second attack in hopes the refugees will rise up against the government.

~~(S)~~ The government recently replaced the Thua Thien province chief and the mayor of Hue because they were corrupt and inefficient, but dissatisfaction will remain high unless more is done.

~~(SECRET)~~ Sec. 3.3(~~NO FOREIGN DISSEM~~)



AN-2 Transport Flies to Vinh in Southern North Vietnam

One of North Vietnam's light transports has flown to the southern part of the country, according to SIGINT, after a pause in such operations of nearly three weeks.

An AN-2 may have landed at Vinh about dusk on 19 March. Its airfield of origin was probably Hanoi/Gia Lam. On the return flight Gia Lam instructed the pilot to take pictures wherever he went. Good visibility was reported at Vinh during the period.

This is the first transport flight to southern North Vietnam since 29 February. At that time, an AN-2 flew to Vinh and probably on to Dong Hoi but was not noted returning. ~~(SECRET)~~ (Sec. 3.3)

Communist China Allegedly Warns Hanoi and NLF Against Peace Talks

The Soviet Counselor in Peiping told a Western diplomat recently that Communist China had warned Hanoi and National Liberation Front (NLF) representatives against participating in any negotiations on Vietnam. Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi reportedly said that such negotiations would constitute an "unfriendly action."

The Soviet claimed that China had offered to increase its assistance to the NLF by sending doctors, medicines, advisers, and technical equipment. North Vietnam was also offered civil defense advisers to assist in the event of a nuclear attacks. According to the Soviet Counselor, China assumed that the US would be forced to use atomic weapons. Peiping was said to be willing to send more Chinese workers, allow greater use of Chinese airfields, and grant access to the Hainan Island radio warning net.

The Soviet diplomat's statements cannot be confirmed, but they appear to be a propaganda ploy designed to convince the US that immediate negotiations are necessary to prevent greater Chinese involvement or a possible Sino-US war. Hanoi already receives many of the types of aid allegedly mentioned; the latest offer apparently represents an increase of such assistance. It is questionable, however, whether a greater use of the Chinese air and early-warning facilities or an increase in the number of laborers would significantly further Hanoi's war effort. The North Vietnamese seem to be deriving adequate use of the facilities, and there are no indications that they need or desire a sizable increase in the number of Chinese workers. (~~SECRET~~
~~NO FOREIGN DISSEM/BACKGROUND USE ONLY~~)

Cambodia Protests Viet Cong Activities

Cambodia's Deputy Premier has told the Viet Cong Front's representative in Phnom Penh that his organization must stop all smuggling operations, improve the behavior of its agents, and cease unauthorized activities.

In a meeting sparked by the discovery of several thousand sacks of rice near the South Vietnamese border, Deputy Premier Son Sann told Nguyen Van Hieu on 23 February that the growing volume of rice being smuggled to Viet Cong forces in South Vietnam was seriously hurting the budget. Since the government was willing to sell it to them, Sann hoped the matter could be settled amicably by the payment of customs duties. Hieu promised to report these comments to the Front and claimed that such traffic had already been forbidden.

Son Sann then cited the rudeness of the Front's agents to Cambodian border officials. He said, "We understand the problems of our friends" but "ask them to be more understanding because we continually receive complaints from the United States that NLF troops seek sanctuary in Cambodia." Hieu said this might be true but only in isolated cases and did not mean that the Front's policy of "respect for the Cambodian Government" had changed.

Son Sann insisted that these actions be stopped and said, "We know all that the NLF troops have done in Cambodia but are obliged to give a negative reply to all accusations." Hieu assured him there would be no more incidents and asked for a resume of specific cases involving inimical acts by Front agents.

This, the first such direct warning, is the clearest indication that Prince Sihanouk is seriously trying to curb Vietnamese Communist activities in Cambodia and is becoming more aware of and sensitive to them. In addition to bolstering the economy by the receipt of customs duties, the move was probably intended to keep the war from spreading into Cambodia. The Prince has already acknowledged that his 32,000-man army cannot prevent Communist use of his country.

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